

ironbound

Proposal To MEM BOARD:

The Ironbound Community Corporation is requesting that MEM pay Ironbound Community Corporation \$2000 for consultant services from Nancy Zak, community organizer, in order for her to continue her work (part time) with the Housing Task Force, using part of the funds given to the Task Force recently by George Younger.

Some Background:

The MEM Housing Task Force formed in 1984, and grew larger as a result of the Sings of Hope Conference. One of the first housing issues the Task Force worked on was pushing the state government to spend surplus dollars to build low income housing (Father Jack Martin, Viola Cook, Eric Duff and others were active at that time).

Out of this initial work (and contacts made during the famous "Umbrella Demonstrations in Trenton), the statewide group Right To Housing was formed. Through petition drives, lobbying, and actions around the state and in Trenton, Right To Housing has made the need for low cost housing a much higher priority in New Jersey (part of the Governor's state of the state messages in 1988 and 1989!). MEM helped organize the local Essex County Chapter of RTH. RTH is an umbrella group which brings together the homeless themselves, and people who are concerned such as those who attended the recent program at Montclair State College. RTH statewide has received financial support and recently hired a staff person to coordinate statewide activities.

On the local level, the Housing Task Force has been supportive of the Coalition To Save Rent Control (a citywide tenants group, and a formative role in 2 new housing groups: the HUD Tenant Coalition, and the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing.

The Coalition To Save Rent Control was successful in stopping a number of changes in the rent control law (including "vacancy decontrol") in Newark, which would have resulted in skyrocketing rents for thousands of tenants who can barely make ends meet. A network of tenants around the city continues as a result of this work, and tenants continue to call for individual advice on particular problems in their buildings.

The HUD Tenant Coalition formed as a subgroup of the above for tenants

Community Corporation
95 Fleming Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 344-7210, 7208

Children's Center
317 Elm St.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 589-6873

Community School
432 Lafayette St.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 589-0800

Community Health Project
Health Screening Van
95 Fleming Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 589-4668

Community Information Center
95 Fleming Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 344-7208, 7210

Senior Citizens Project
Meals-on-Wheels
Home Friend Program
95 Fleming Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 344-7208; 7210

Senior Ride
95 Fleming Ave.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 344-6695

Adult Education Project
432 Lafayette St.
Newark, N.J. 07105
(201) 465-0947

whose buildings are NOT covered by rent control, because their buildings are subsidized or mortgaged by HUD, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. This category applies to thousands of apartments in Newark today, and if these buildings are lost - either because they are not maintained properly, rent increases are too drastic, or owners "prepay" their mortgages and convert the buildings to condominiums - it will mean difficult times for the many low income and working families who currently live there.

The Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing was formed to deal with a specific crisis: the destruction of low income housing units by the Newark Housing Authority. It is currently bringing a legal suit against the NHA to stop the dynamiting of sound high rise buildings which could be used to house the homeless or the 11,000 persons on the NHA waiting list.

As a part time consultant for the MEM Housing Task Force, Nancy would:

- 1) continue to act as co-chair and provide staff support for the MEM Housing Task Force
- 2) continue to work to involve people in housing issues (whether through Right To Housing, CTSRC, the HUD Coalition or the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing), at the same time introducing them to MEM. Continue to provide technical and organizing assistance to tenants, and others with housing problems.
- 3) continue to be available to church groups, parishes, school groups etc. to do workshops on the housing crisis and how people can be involved in helping to solve it.
- 4) work along with Rev. Burgess to raise additional funds to carry on the needed organizing work on housing issues. In the past several months we have jointly prepared a number of proposals. If additional funds are found, hours can be increased, and hopefully, additional persons hired. The proposals look toward having a citywide tenants Conference, and the development of a tenant newsletter and hotline.